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POST-PRIMORDIAL PLEASURES: THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH AND THE QUESTION OF ORIGINS

James Davidson

What I want to examine in this paper are the links between pleasure and the origins of pleasure in ancient Greece—births of pleasure, discoveries of pleasure, first pleasures. This is part of a larger project looking at how time constructs pleasure and how pleasure constructs time: the degree to which the History of Pleasure—the presence in a community of a sense of pleasure’s history, of a sense that pleasure has a history—can give a particular flavouring or colouring to a sense of the past and the present, and on the other hand, the degree to which pleasures themselves gain something or lose something from being plotted on to a timeline.

I will be confining myself to the pleasures of the flesh—eating, drinking and fornicating—and largely taking their status as pleasures for granted. I by no means wish to suggest these are the only pleasures worth talking about, but the carnal pleasures contest the boundaries of the definition of pleasure less strenuously than, say, the pleasures of train-spotting, stamp-collecting, or even the *goût de l'archive*, all of which have, apparently, given pleasure to millions. At the same time we must acknowledge the apparently universal character of these kinds of pleasures, which makes their cultural contextualization, and in particular their being mapped onto the field of time, more intriguing.

The pleasures of today

One of the ways in which pleasure and time are intertwined in Greek culture has now become something close to a commonplace in the scholarship of the pleasures of the flesh: the passion for or even obsession with fish in classical

Athens and the ancient mystery of the 'fish missing from Homer'.¹ For, as Plato (and his comic poet contemporaries) noticed, the heroes of the *Iliad* don't eat fish even though they are encamped on the coast for a decade:

'You know that when his heroes are campaigning he doesn't give them fish to feast on, even though they are by the sea in the Hellespont, nor boiled meat either. Instead he gives them only roasted meat, which is the kind most easily available to soldiers, for it's easier nearly everywhere to use fire alone than to carry pots and pans... Nor, I believe, does Homer mention sauces anywhere. Indeed, aren't even the other athletes aware that if one's body is to be kept in good condition, one must abstain from all such things?' 'Yes and they do well to be aware of it and to abstain from them'. 'If you think that', Socrates continues, 'then it seems you don't approve of Syracusan cuisine, or Sicilian-style dishes'. 'I do not'. 'Then you also object to Corinthian girls for men who are to be in good physical condition.... and Attic pastries... I believe that we would be right to compare this diet... to the kinds of lyric odes and songs that are composed in all sorts of modes and rhythms...' (Plato, *Republic* 404be).²

It has not been too difficult to put these two odd features of Greek culture—classical fishmania (*opsomania*) and epic fishlessness (*anopsia*)—together. Fish was very strongly associated with the marketplace of the modern thalassocratic city of classical Athens—something you went shopping for, something you traded for money—while the selection, preparation, and consumption of meat was securely attached to central symbolic collective rituals, i.e. blood sacrifice. In this way fish-consumption was one large section of the category of food that was open to preference, connoisseurship, greed, and self-indulgence, thus allowing for the development or even overdevelopment of a particular kind of subjectivity: *opsophagia*. But, as Plato points out so graphically, this consuming subject, this wish-listing, market-scanning, haggling, purchasing, and wolfing-

¹ Davidson 1996, 57-64.

² Cf. Eubulus 118.

down subject, the *opsophagos*, was at the same time a *contemporary* consuming subject, inseparable from the marketplace and money economy of Athens in the classical period. The pleasure of fish-consumption was very much a pleasure of today, like the pleasure of Corinthian courtesans and modern music.

Writers could play games with that strong contemporary flavouring of fish-consumption by transposing it onto the epic past or writing treatises on it, such as Archestratus's *Hēdupatheia*, in inappropriately Homeric hexameters, thus emphasizing the essential post-heroic modernity of fish-consumption through the effects of incongruity. A whole genre of comedy, the mythological burlesque, depended for a lot of its comedy on the jarring juxtaposition of ancient heroic characters and plots with the trivial trappings of modern day life, which may be one reason why so many of the very many comic fragments mentioning fish come from the period when mythological burlesque was at its height in the fourth century BCE.

This association of the pleasures of modern-market-bought fish with the life of the present day fell alongside other aspects of evanescence in the cultural construction of fish—its naturally early sell-by date, its fast disappearance from the market-stall, its disappearance from the plate or even from the pan—to give a sense of desperate urgency to the pleasure of consuming fish so that ancient descriptions of fish-lovers often bear a strong resemblance, strangely, to modern discourses about drug-addicts, desperate for their next fix. *Opsophagia* was not just of the present, as Plato implies, i.e. a quintessentially contemporary phenomenon, it was also of the immediate present, the passing present, the *dies carpendus*, of the soon-to-go-off.³

³ Davidson 1997, ch. 1.

Sex too could develop a flavouring of contemporaneity. The prominence of paid professional cithara-boys, often of slave status, for instance, in the defensive and combative fourth-century literature on Greek homosexuality was not just a side-effect of the increasing complexity of modern music 'in all sorts of modes and rhythms' and the need for professional training in order to perform it. But inasmuch as the male and female *mousourgoi* hired to provide song and dance at classical *symposia* were often thought to have compromised their virtue by such intimate performances, the slave, ex-slave or simply low-status cithara-boys became associated with a less virtuous, more commoditized version of same-sex *erōs*. In this way the handsome musicians were used to mark out more clearly the particular sexual subjectivity of men such as Misgolas, who was often seen in their company, with an implicit and sometimes explicit contrast with the noble same-sex relationships of men in the heroic past like Achilles and Patroclus inasmuch as the cithara-boys, selected for their looks as much as their skill, seemed to foreground the element of sexual gratification over more traditional motivations and modalities in same-sex love such as, e.g., loyalty, honour, self-sacrifice, devotion and freedom.⁴ As for Plato's vaguely generalised 'Corinthian' courtesans, they too accumulated specific marks of contemporaneity, simply because they had become specific celebrities of a specific time-anchored cultural scene, not at all generalized but named and indeed (in)famous.⁵ And comic poets were not so chivalrous as to fail to note the passage of time in the lives of these named celebrities and the specific effects this passage of time had on their beauty, their availability and their price.⁶

Finally there is the whole question of morality. As is clear from Plato's brief list of modern pleasures, emphasizing the novelty of pleasures and drawing

⁴ Davidson 2007, 451, 453, 455.

⁵ Davidson 2006, 29-51, cf. for instance *ta'pi Charixenes*, 'the age of Charixene', Aristophanes *Ecc.* 943.

⁶ E.g. Epicrates fr. 3.

contrasts with the world of epic, in other words *contemporizing* pleasures, links pleasures to the debility of modern men in contrast to the heroes of Homer and provides some rhetorical assistance in a moral campaign to reduce or eliminate those pleasures of today, as if they were merely spoonfuls of froth on the surface of time, in order to regain the vigour of the past.

For modern students of the ancient world, therefore, understanding the strangeness of ancient pleasure means understanding ancient pleasure in its ancient context, and an important part of that ancient context is the ancient temporal context. To understand how the Greeks thought about and even experienced pleasures of the flesh, it is helpful, or maybe even necessary, to think about how they had been plotted onto a timeline. We might even say that this temporal aspect of pleasure—the sense that pleasure has a history, a present and a past—is a central feature of how the Greeks understood pleasure.

Inventions of love

But now I want to explore the other end of pleasure's timeline—not the ends in the fashionable contemporary scene, but the beginnings in the distant past—how the construction, the understanding and maybe even the experience of the pleasures of the flesh are affected by a concern with births, discoveries and origins in general. For one of the most startling features of the imagined past of the Greeks and one of the most peculiar features of its structuring of time is the obsession with ‘firsts’. Jacob Burckhardt noted with some mischievous amusement that the Athenians alone boasted of having invented competition, law and justice, the cultivation of olives and figs, how to drink from wells, how to harness horses to carts and even ‘how to walk upright’.⁷ Other cities were no

⁷ Burckhardt 1998 [1898-1902], 219, with note 21, citing Aelian *VH* 3.38, Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 5b *ap.* Athenaeus 2.38cd cf. 5.179e, Burckhardt misses the qualification “upright after drinking”.

less proud of their own innovations. Halicarnassus, we now know, disputed the claim of the Athenian Cecrops to have invented marriage, insisting it was their own local hero Hermaphroditos who deserved the credit.⁸ In the Hellenistic world especially these firsts became almost a genre of literature, heurematology or protography, traces of which can be found even in the greatest monuments of Hellenistic literature—Callimachus's *Aitia* for instance, or Apollonius's *Argonautika*. By the first century of our era Pliny the Elder and Hyginus were able to draw up long lists of first inventors—*quis quid invenit*—of a very wide range of things: fire, houses, sacrifice, taming animals, agriculture, pottery, dyeing cloth.⁹

These myths have the effect of presenting the world we see around us today as a world that has become, as a world that stands at the end of a long process not of evolution but of addition, as each accumulating innovation gradually makes the world look more like the one we are familiar with, stocking it with the things, the artefacts and institutions we see around us. By the same token such myths empty the past of such artefacts and institutions, turning the early epoch into a potentially dark, chaotic void. More important, they raise some pointed John-Lennon-like questions about the present, undermining its seeming normality and inevitability—imagine there's no marriage, imagine there's no houses, imagine there's no fire, imagine a world without slavery, a world without sacrifice, cloth, crops, pots, the disenfranchisement of women—provoking us into a game of historical Jenga or jackstraws to see what we can remove before the whole pile collapses and the past falls apart into something uselessly unrecognisable.¹⁰

⁸ Lloyd-Jones, 1999, 1–14, esp. 2 ll. 19–20: *hos gamon heuren andrasi kai lechea prōtos edēse nomōi*, cf. Isager and Pedersen 2004.

⁹ Hyginus 274 and 277, Pliny *NH* 191–215, Kleingünther 1933, Thraede 1962.

¹⁰ For the story of how the women of Athens lost the vote, see Varro *ap.* Augustine, *City of God* 18.9.

Among these stories of firsts and origins are stories about the beginnings of the pleasures of the flesh. As has long been noted, one of the reasons that Eros—'fairest among the deathless gods, who unnerves the limbs and overcomes the mind and wise counsels of all gods and all men'—appears so early in Hesiod's *Theogony*, fourth thing in existence, by my count, is that a force of attraction is needed to get the primordial gods together.¹¹ After the theogonic hiatus caused by Uranus' pushing her progeny back into Earth's womb, sexual attraction was born again from the froth that surrounded his severed genitals in the form of Aphrodite, whose *moira* is 'sweet delight (*terpsis*) and gentle intimacy (*philotēs*)', who, indeed, gave her name, uniquely, to a particular sphere of human experience, to sexual pleasures, *ta aphrodisia*, 'the things of Aphrodite'.¹²

It has long been suspected, not unreasonably, that the reason the Greeks needed a boy-god of Love as well as an Aphrodite had something to do with the social institution of the love of boys, but according to their own mythology, the pleasures of homosexuality and/or the institution of Greek Love had a starting date rather later than Hesiod's Eros. According to a widespread Greek tradition, homosexuality even had a pioneer (an inventor, a discoverer, a sexual revolutionary, or a popularizer) in the form of Laius, father of Oedipus, who carried off Chrysippus, the handsome young son of his host, Pelops. So Plato in *Laws* can talk of 'following in nature's steps and enacting that law which held good before the days of Laius, declaring that it is right to refrain from indulging in the same kind of sexual intercourse with men and boys as with women'.¹³

¹¹ Hesiod, *Theog.* 120-22, Vernant 1990, 465-78.

¹² *Theog.* 206, cf. Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 419-33.

¹³ *Laws* 8. 836c. The example is very pertinent to Plato's argument inasmuch as later in the dialogue he suggests using myths and stories to create a cultural taboo against homosexuality

Elsewhere in the same dialogue he blames the invention of homosexuality—and here it is clear he is talking of sexual pleasure—*tas peri aphrodisia hēdonas*—on the Cretans and the Spartans, thanks to their all-male spaces of the gymnasium and the common mess.¹⁴ Interestingly he accuses the Cretans of inventing both an inventor and a moment of invention in the form of Zeus's rape of Ganymede, as a false foundation-myth by which to justify their indulgence: 'Since they believe their laws and institutions come from Zeus, they added this slander against Zeus to mythology, so that it would be as the god's disciples, if you can believe it, that they would be enjoying this pleasure too'.¹⁵ Pindar, however, put the date of the invention of homosexual *erōs* back a generation or two by making Poseidon besotted with Pelops in a time before either his younger brother, Zeus, became besotted with Ganymede or a young Laius became besotted with Pelops' son Chrysippus.¹⁶

The invention of love, especially same-sex *erōs*, could be considered something of a favourite topic of Plato. In *Phaedrus*, a divinely inspired Socrates gives a kind of allegorical reading of the myth of Ganymede, as if, this time, it was a true story misread or misheard by mortal poets. The eagle-rapt boy is used as a mythical model for the soul of the beloved, which is carried aloft on wings of love and produces a love-stream that drenches the admirer, i.e. Zeus, and splashes back on the beloved himself. This is Plato's myth of the invention of *himeros*—'imminent desire'—a name bestowed on this love-stream by Zeus himself, here probably allegorizing the stream of nectar and ambrosia that Ganymede was thought to pour for Zeus.¹⁷ In the *Symposium* he has Pausanias

in the same way that myths of e.g. Oedipus have created a taboo about incest, *Laws* 8.838b-839d.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 1, 636bc.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 636cd.

¹⁶ According to Pindar, Poseidon fell in love with Pelops and abducted him to serve the gods on Olympia, "where Ganymede would come on a second occasion". *Ol.* 1.43-4; cf. Davidson 2007, 221-7, and, on Laius and Chrysippus, 231-4.

¹⁷ Plato, *Phdr.* 255bc; cf. Davidson 13-14.

allegorize the Hesiodic versus the Homeric versions of the birth of Aphrodite; the former, born from Ouranos's genitals, is the more ancient, purely masculine Heavenly 'Uranian' form of love, to be seen in the noble and restrained love of boys, while her younger alter-ego, 'Vulgar' Aphrodite Pandemos, the daughter of Zeus and Dione, is half female and represents the kind of hubristic love that is seen in love for women and the ignoble pursuit of boys.¹⁸ In the same dialogue, Aristophanes proposes a very different myth of the origins of human sexual desire; each person is merely a slice of an original four-legged creature that ever longs to reconnect with its lost other half, with genitals moved to the front in order to assist in the act of temporary bodily re-joining, turning coition into the pleasure of (recreating) the past.¹⁹

Moreover, the Cretan celebration, according to Plato, of Zeus's abduction of Ganymede as a model for their own homosexual practices, 'since they believe their laws and institutions come from Zeus', connects to a major theme of the *Laws*: the story that Minos, king of Crete, Moses-like, received laws directly from Zeus in the cave to which the participants in the dialogue are walking. Indeed Aristotle states straightforwardly of Crete that 'the law-giver/Minos made intercourse to be directed towards males' to prevent overpopulation. It is hardly surprising therefore that the practices of Cretan homosexuality are described as part of 'the Cretan Constitution' both in Ephorus' account of Cretan customs and in the Aristotelian *Constitution of Crete*.²⁰ Indeed one of the most striking features of Greek discussion of Greek homosexuality is the constant reference to law and law-givers.²¹ Plato's comment about the invention of the myth of

¹⁸ Plato, *Symp.* 180c-181e.

¹⁹ Plato, *Symp.* 191bc.

²⁰ Plato, *Laws* 1.636bd, Aristotle, *Pol.* 1272a. Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F149 ap. Strabo 10.4,21, Aristotle fragment 611 (Rose). This explains why some ancient authors made Minos himself the abductor of Ganymede/ inventor of homosexuality, Suda, Mu 1092, s.v. 'Minos', Echemenes, *FGrHist* 459 F 1, Dosiadas, *FGrHist* 458 F 5, with Jacoby's notes ad loc.

²¹ On the importance of *nomos*, 'law/custom', *nomothesia* 'legislation' and *nomothetai* 'lawgivers' in the Greek discourse on Greek Homosexuality, see Davidson, 2007, 469-70.

Ganymede anticipates a debate later in the dialogue about what place should be given to homosexual sex in the laws and constitution of the new city. It was not Laius but the Theban lawgivers who institutionalized same-sex *erōs* in Thebes, according to Plutarch, and it was Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, according to Xenophon, who laid down how *paidikos erōs* was supposed to proceed in Sparta.²²

First tastings of wine

Some of the most famous and pervasive myths of the origin of pleasure, of course, concerned epiphanies of Dionysus and the invention of wine. The most famous of these epiphanies happened in Thebes a generation or so before Laius invented homosexuality. 'Two things are primary for mortals', Tiresias claims in Euripides's *Bacchae*: the gifts of Demeter and the grief-ceasing, troubles-oblivionizing potion that Dionysus 'discovered' (*hēure*).²³ It took too long for Pentheus, the king of Thebes, to realise this truth and so he was plucked from the tree where he was spying on his Bacchant aunts and ripped limb from limb by his own mother.

In Attica priority was claimed by the mountain village of Icarion, which won authentication for its claim from the oracle at Delphi, and which already by the second half of the sixth century had an unusual colossal marble cult-statue of Dionysus seated with a kantharos cup, and by the fifth century was wealthy enough to offer loans, showing all the signs of being a major cult site.²⁴ According to the Icarians' myth of epiphany, which linked the invention of wine with the invention of tragedy and of processions of images of the phallus, Dionysus first taught the art of the vine to their hero Icarius, identified at some point with the constellation Boötes, the Wagoner. The shepherds who first

²² Plutarch, *Pel.* 19.1, Xenophon, *Lac.* 2.12-14.

²³ Euripides, *Bacchae* 279.

²⁴ Pausanias 1.2,5, Romano 1982, 398–409, Whitehead 1986, 215–18.

tasted this new pleasure ended up in a drunken stupor that their bucolic colleagues misinterpreted as the deadly effects of a poison. They therefore murdered Icarius. When their drunken friends woke up with what can properly be called the mother of all hangovers they realised their mistake and fled, but the murder of Icarius did not go unpunished. Dionysus took on the form of a beautiful youth, a divine vengeful prick-tease, and having aroused in them the urge for intercourse he disappeared, leaving them with unresolvable erections. In agony they went to Delphi to ask how they might be relieved. The answer was that they should make images of their erections and offer them to the god. And this is why phalluses are carried in honour of Dionysus.²⁵

Dionysus is also in danger of violation in accounts of another epiphany on board the boat of the Tyrrhenian pirates, a tale told most famously in the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, the criminals only realising the godhead of the handsome youth they had kidnapped when the mast starts sprouting tendrils and bunches of grapes, and terrifying visions of wild animals cause them to abandon ship, at which point they are turned into dolphins.²⁶ But it was not enough simply to know this god and this new pleasure of wine, you also had to know how to use it properly by mixing wine with water. This knowledge also had a founding hero in the form of the Attic king Amphictyon—'first man to blend'—, something he learnt from Dionysus himself, which is why, as

²⁵ Lucian scholia ed. Rabe pp. 211.14-212.8, 280. 4-12, scholiast ad Hom. *Il.* 22.29, cf. Luppe 1996, 29-33, Hyginus, *Fab.* 130, *Astr.* 2.4, Nonnus, *Dion.* 47.34-264, Burkert 1972, 223 n. 37, cf. Eratosthenes, *Erigone* fr. 22-6 (Powell). The myth is the subject of a famous mosaic from the House of Dionysus in Nea Paphos, Cyprus, of the late second cent. CE; Ikarios, named, is shown as an old man with his ox-cart; on the right are two figures labelled *hoi prōtoi oinon piontes*, cf. Dunbabin 1999, 227-9. Apollodorus 3.14.7 places the reception of Dionysus by Icarius, and that of Demeter by Celeus, in the reign of the second kind of Athens, Pandion.

²⁶ Homeric Hymns 7 *To Dionysus*, Apollodorus 3.37-8, Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.17. In Ovid's account, *Met.* 3.572-689, one of the pirates survives to join the *thiasos* and be interrogated by Pentheus. The threat of violation by the pirates is implicit in all the accounts that emphasize Dionysus's youthful beauty but explicit in Hyginus, *Fabulae* 134. and Servius. on *Aeneid* 1.67.

Burckhardt observed, he was credited with teaching the world how to stand up, or rather, as Burckhardt failed to explain, to remain standing.²⁷

Origins of love and wine in images and practices

Such myths are not merely obscure local fairy tales dug out of libraries by Hellenistic mythographers, they had a much wider presence in the culture and were celebrated in popular images and/or reflected in ritual practices. The Hesiodic early hatching of (winged) Eros, for instance, is invoked in Aristophanes' *Birds* as proof of the priority of winged creatures before whose appearance no sexual intercourse and therefore no *genesis* of gods could take place.²⁸ Eros was celebrated on the fourth day of every month, a reflection of or a provocation for, I have suggested elsewhere, the fact that he was born fourth in Hesiod's sequence of epiphanies in *Theogony*.²⁹ So we may even be able to discover a reflection of Hesiod's Theogonic sequence, a celebration of the birth of Eros, in the fact that the festival of Eros at his shrine on the slopes of the Acropolis in Athens was celebrated on the fourth day of the month Mounychion. The birth of Aphrodite, meanwhile, was the subject of a famous painting by Apelles in the temple of Asclepius in Cos, later even more famously re-imagined by Botticelli.³⁰ Apelles was said to have taken as his model the image of the courtesan Phryne, emerging from the waves during the festival of Aphrodite on Aegina—the courtesan, described as Aphrodite's 'interpreter and temple-keeper' (*hypophētin kai zakoron*), here clearly re-enacting as a form of pageant the goddess's birth rising from the waves.³¹ The same pageant, it was believed, provided a model for Praxiteles' famous statue of the goddess for the temple of Aphrodite Euploia, Successful Sailing, in Cnidus.³²

²⁷ Philochorus, *FGrHist* 328 F 5b *ap.* Athenaeus 2.38cd, cf. 5.179e.

²⁸ Aristophanes, *Birds* 696-700.

²⁹ Davidson 2007, 17 and 22-3.

³⁰ Strabo 14.2,19.

³¹ Athenaeus 13.590de, Hyperides *On Behalf of Phryne* fr. 171 Jensen.

³² Athenaeus 13.590f -591a.

From the third century onwards poets celebrated the two works of art for their seductiveness but also for their realism—or rather for the sense they produced of witnessing the goddess's arrival on earth: 'Apelles saw Aphrodite herself brought forth naked from the wet-nurse sea, and that is how he drew her...', 'Apelles saw the Cyprian as she was escaping her mother's loins, still murmuring with foam... not painted but alive', 'Apelles watched Aphrodite as she came up from the sea'.³³ 'This must be the work of Praxiteles' hands, or perhaps Olympus is bereft, the Paphian having come to Cnidus'. 'Where did Praxiteles see me naked?'³⁴

It is more difficult to gauge the cultural impact of stories of the origins of homosexuality, especially the myths of Laius and of the rape of Ganymede, in Greek culture, short of noting that Plato thought them worth alluding to in his attack on the practice in *Laws* and in his allegorical re-interpretations in *Phaedrus*. But from the archaic to the Hellenistic period, poets compared their love for boys with that of Zeus, and their beloveds with Ganymede, while images of the pair often allude to a contemporary real world context, with indications of traditional courting-gifts like cockerels that might seem unnecessary for a prospective victim of abduction, bringing the myth into the world of late archaic Athens.³⁵ And it would have been a particularly unimaginative Cretan who did not anticipate Plato's conjecture and think of the abduction of Ganymede when he participated in the Cretan boy-abduction ceremony described by Ephorus, concluding as it did with a public sacrifice to Zeus.³⁶ There was at least one fifth-century tragedy on the subject of Laius's passion for Chrysippus—the very first

³³ *Anthologia Palatina* 5.179 (Archias), 182 (Leonidas of Tarentum), *P. Berol.* 9812.6-9.

³⁴ *Anthologia Palatina* 5. 159, 160, 162.

³⁵ Theognis 1345-1350, *Anthologia Palatina* 12.68 (Meleager), 67 (Anon.) 65 (Meleager) 101 (Meleager).

³⁶ Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 149 *ap.* Strabo 10.4,21.

originator of love of males among the Greeks’—by Euripides, and other dramatic versions probably inspired the Italian vase-painters in their depictions.³⁷

Dionysus's arrival is such a central feature of his myth and cult that he has sometimes been called the god of epiphany.³⁸ So the first appearance (of the god) of wine was commemorated in a number of cults with the arrival of his image. In Sicyon two red-faced and otherwise gold-covered images of the god were kept in secret and brought to the temple of Dionysus next to the theatre only one night a year, accompanied by a torch procession and hymns.³⁹ The statues were said to have been carved from the very tree that Pentheus fatefully climbed to spy on Dionysus's early converts. Delphi had told the Sicyonians to find the tree and to worship it equally with the god himself.⁴⁰

Similarly in Athens the legendary arrival of (the cult of) Dionysus from Eleutherae on the Boeotian border was recreated every year on the eve of the City Dionysia with a procession of (the image of) Dionysus coming on the road from Eleutherae, a myth not about the introduction of one cult among many, but about ‘*the first introduction of the cult of Dionysos in Athens*’, as Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood has emphasised, reconstructing the entire festival with all its eventual performances as a kind of welcoming entertainment for a distinguished foreign visitor.⁴¹ Appropriately a figure representing Pegasus of Eleutherae, who, after the inevitable initial opposition and punishment—another erection-affliction assuaged by the honouring of the god with phalluses—had introduced

³⁷ Davidson 2007, 231-4. Aelian NA 6.15 on Euripides's presentation of Laius: *tou tōn arrhenōn erōtos... Hellēnōn prōtistos arxas*. Rape of Chrysippus: Berlin Antikensammlung 1968.12.

³⁸ Detienne 1986, 13-14: “le dieu le plus épidémique du panthéon c'est assurément Dionysos, qui fait de la parousie un mode d'action privilégié”.

³⁹ Pausanias 2.7.5-6.

⁴⁰ Pausanias 2.2.7.

⁴¹ Sourvinou-Inwood 1994, 269-90, 274 [her italics].

the Eleutheraean cult, was to be found alongside Dionysus, on the threshold of the city, just inside the Dipylon gate next to a shrine of Dionysus.⁴²

There was, of course, another big festival in honour of Dionysus, the Anthesteria, which Thucydides calls 'more ancient'.⁴³ The festival was one of the most important and central in the lives of those who hailed from cities of an Ionian cultural allegiance—the closest thing they had to Christmas, it has been said, in terms of emotional appeal.⁴⁴ Appropriately this prior festival was linked to the myth of Icarius, who as a wine-missionary was given priority over Pegasus.⁴⁵ In particular the death of Icarius's daughter Erigone, who had hanged herself after finding her father's corpse, was commemorated in the swinging festival called the *Aiora*, which is generally assigned to the third day of the Anthesteria. And there were other potential reminders of the myth in the festival, not just in the carrying of phalluses and the arrival of Dionysus on a ship/wagon, and the excessive drinking followed by rituals for the hung over 'survivors', but in the strange now-you-see-him-now-you-don't opening and closing of the temple of Dionysus-in-the-marshes, opened only one day a year, Day 2 of the festival (although processions are recorded only for Days 1 and 3, reflecting the brief arousing epiphany and disappearance of the longed-for

⁴² Pausanias 1.2.5.

⁴³ Thucydides 2.15. 4.

⁴⁴ Parker 2007, 290.

⁴⁵ We should not exaggerate the degree to which the myth of Icarius dominated the Anthesteria. As Robert Parker has pointed out (2007, 375-6), the myths that were attached to the festival, or at least those that were thought worth mentioning by scholiasts, relate to a wide range of myths, the entertainment of a polluted Orestes in Athens, Deucalion's flood, a nice example of making do or *bricolage*, while the origin myths attached to myths of Pegasus or Icarius seem to relate to institutions of Dionysiac worship in general, e.g. Dionysus's wagon and the carrying of phalluses, rather than some specific practices of the Anthesteria/ City Dionysia. On the other hand the evidence for an old important cult of Dionysus at Icarion is powerful, albeit strictly circumstantial, evidence that the myth of Icarius was not a late invention, Whitehead 1986, 215–18, Lewis 1956, 172. And if the myths seem to relate to Dionysiac practices in general, it is clear that those practices and indeed other peculiarities of the Anthesteria harken back to the epiphany of Dionysus, the origins of wine and/or the post-primordial period of the flood.

Dionysus to the satyriasic shepherds).⁴⁶ Finally, of course, the first taste of wine is commemorated in the festival by the competitive drinking of neat wine straight from a pouring jug on Day 2, Choes, and also by the custom of offering on this occasion a first taste of wine to children, a cultural practice that has resulted in the unearthing of large numbers of souvenir child-sized wine-jugs.⁴⁷

The invention of the practice of mixing wine with water also had a reflection in cult if one knew where to look for it, for Philochorus the local historian of Attica associates it with an altar of Upright Dionysus in the sanctuary of the Seasons, adjacent to an altar of the Nymphs (i.e. water). He adds that Amphietyon also established the custom that each symposium should begin with drinking a toast of neat wine to the *Agathos Daimon* as a 'demonstration of the power of the good divinity.... Moreover, he established the custom of repeating the name of Zeus the Saviour (*Sotēr*) over the mixed wine as a warning and reminder to drinkers that only when they drank in this way would they be safe and sound'.⁴⁸

These introductions of wine to humankind are normally placed in the earliest strata of mortal mythology, soon after the autochthonous founders emerged from the earth, but the first taste of wine by those too primitive or remote from civilisation to have become used to it is a popular trope in Greek myth and legend. Milk-fed Polyphemus in the *Odyssey* is delighted with the wine Odysseus brings, comparing it to nectar and ambrosia. Uneducated in the

⁴⁶ [Demosthenes] 59. 76, Thucydides 2.15.4. As Parker notes, there were processions to the temple on days 1, Pithoigia, and 3, Chutroi, but not, apparently, on day 2, Choes, the only day when the temple was open (Parker 2007, 291).

⁴⁷ Burkert 2007, 221, Hamilton 1992. Strictly speaking the first taste of wine is only an inference from the fact that children in their third year were crowned with flowers at the festival and, apparently, given a miniature *chous*, but it is as safe an inference as the one that allows us to infer a bridal bath from a *loutrophoros*.

⁴⁸ Philochorus, *FGrHist* 328 F 5b *ap.* Athenaeus 2.38cd, On *Agathos Daimon* see Ogden, 2013, 298-9.

dangers of the liquid he is soon sound asleep and vulnerable to blinding.⁴⁹ Another myth concerns Heracles's visit to the cave of the centaur Pholus. With him Dionysus had left a quantity of wine to be left untouched until Heracles should appear. When Heracles appeared, and perhaps at his insistence, the wine was opened. The bouquet attracted centaurs from miles around who, once they had tasted of the new kind of liquor, became somewhat aggressive to the point that Heracles was obliged to kill them with arrows dipped in the blood of the Hydra.⁵⁰ An even more famous centauromachy was the one at the wedding of the Lapith Pirithous. The story is already hinted at by Homer in the *Odyssey* when Antinous uses the example of the centaur Eurytion in the halls of Pirithous as an example of drunken insolence and its punishment; and Pindar vividly described the moment when the centaurs, intoxicated by the smell of wine, thrust their beakers of milk off the table and reached uninvited for the silver drinking-horns.⁵¹

Images of these introductions of wine/cult of Dionysus were among the most popular themes for Greek artists, whether decorating temples or cups. There is not much definite evidence for early representations of the epiphany of Dionysus in Icarion or of the introduction of his cult from Eleutherae.⁵² But one of the most famous of all ancient vases is the borderless red-flooded tondo of

⁴⁹ Hom *Od.* 9.354-365.

⁵⁰ Attached to this tale are the famous tales of the immortal centaur Chiron who was shot accidentally and swapped his immortality for Heracles's mortality to relieve the pain, and of the host Pholus himself who picked up one of the arrows, wondering that something so small could destroy a beast so magnificent, and, distracted in his wonderment, dropped it, fatally, on his own foot.

⁵¹ *Od.* 21.295-8, Pindar fr. 166 *ap.* Athenaeus 11.476bc.

⁵² Robertson 1986, 71-90, suggests that the figure on the reverse of a fragmentary *pelike* in the Getty—*Beazley Archive* 28880; Getty 81AE.62—is actually Ikarios, but identifications of the Attic hero, overwhelmingly in the work of 'The Affector', e.g. *BA* 301311, 301322, 301332, 301333 etc. are highly circumstantial. Near a shrine of Dionysus, appropriately at the entrance to the city near the Dipylon gate, Pausanias saw images of Amphiptyon entertaining Dionysus and of Pegasus who brought the cult from Eleutherae (1.2,5).

Exekias' kylix in Munich showing the epiphany of Dionysus on the ship of the Tyrrhenians, as told in the Homeric Hymn.⁵³ The arrival of Dionysus at the head of a *thiasos* of satyrs and maenads was a popular theme on Attic drinking-cups and mixing-bowls from the sixth century to the end of the fifth, and his role as the bringer of wine or even as the proselytizer of the cult of wine is sometimes emphasized by his being paired on the same vase with scenes of the so-called 'mission' of Triptolemus who, according to Athenian myth, spread the good news about agriculture around the world.⁵⁴ Images of a dismembered young Pentheus distributed amongst the Bacchants allude to the origins of wine rather more brutally.⁵⁵

There are many images of Heracles fighting centaurs on vases and in temple sculpture from the seventh century onwards; enough of them have sufficient indications that the fateful visit to the cave of Pholos is intended. The *Beazley Archive* pottery database comes up with 85 scenes with Herakles and Pholos, many referring to the story straightforwardly by showing a giant submerged *pithos* with its lid removed. One black-figure amphora in the Louvre (#7585) has the word *kentauros* curling from the rim like wine fumes; others show the battle itself; Dionysos is often to be found nearby.⁵⁶ There are rather fewer images on vases identifiable as the battle at the wedding of Pirithous and Hippodameia, but it is clear that the metopes on the south side of the Parthenon, for instance, refer to this event, not least because of the presence of women and of drinking vessels knocked over and even weaponised.

Milled life

⁵³ BA 310403.

⁵⁴ Robertson 1986, 83-8.

⁵⁵ Especially popular in the early years of the fifth century e.g. BA11686, 43279, 45070, 200077, 201114, 201963.

⁵⁶ The most succinct discussion of the texts and images remains Gantz 1993, 390-2.

There is no birth of the pleasures of food to compare with births of love and of sex and inventions of wine and homosexuality. But there is one set of myths, rituals, and images often twinned with the invention of wine that plot the human consumption of food on a timeline. The most famous version of the myth is that told in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the story of the rape of Persephone, the grief of her mother Demeter, her residence in Eleusis, the temporary release of her daughter and the teaching of her Mysteries to the Eleusinians, including the prince Triptolemus.

Although in the *Hymn* the focus is on the revelation of the Eleusinian Mysteries and it seems clear, reading between the lines, that men had been sowing and ploughing—and indeed sacrificing—before agriculture was interrupted by Demeter's grief, in practice there was a fusion between the teaching of the Mysteries and the teaching of the secrets of the Neolithic revolution from an early date, not just ploughing and sowing, but also threshing and milling, so that Eleusis was celebrated as the origin of agriculture and Triptolemus as the man who spread the techniques of agriculture around the Greek world.⁵⁷

Again one must try to assess the presence of such myths in the culture. The myths of the gift of grain would certainly have currency and vividness in Athens during the various long Eleusinian festivals. Images of Triptolemus' 'mission', sowing seeds of wheat from his flying chariot, became popular on Athenian vases from the mid-sixth century onwards, and that mission seems to have been described in some detail in Sophocles' lost early play *Triptolemus*, produced in c. 468 BCE, according to Pliny the Elder.⁵⁸ For the initiates at Eleusis

⁵⁷ *Homeric Hymn 2 to Demeter* 305-313. Hayashi 1992.

⁵⁸ Sophocles fr.596-617, Pliny *NH* 18.65.

it would have been difficult to avoid monuments to the primacy of Triptolemus. That primacy would have been reinforced even to those who had never made the trip to Eleusis or heard of Triptolemus when the Athenians produced their imperialistic demand that, as a due return for that great gift for mankind, other cities must or might like to pay a first fruits offering of grain to the two goddesses.⁵⁹

There were other similar but more generalized allusions to belief in epochal advances in human alimentation. So we learn from several proverb-collections that there was a custom at Athenian weddings for a boy with both parents living—a *pais amphithales*—to put on a crown of thorns intertwined with acorns while carrying a winnowing fan full of loaves, repeating the formula ‘I/They fled the bad; I/they discovered the better’, ἔφυγον κακόν, εὔρον ἄμεινον—a formula also intoned in Bacchic initiations, according to Demosthenes, and therefore perhaps a well-known formula of ceremonies of transition in general.⁶⁰ Acorns had long been associated with a primitive diet and the paroemiographers and lexicographers explained the custom, not unreasonably, as symbolizing that ‘they have thrust away the savage (*agrius*) and ancient diet, and have discovered the civilised (*hēmeros* ‘domesticated’, ‘cultivated’, ‘tame’) form of nourishment’.⁶¹ The *Suda* cites further proverbs and phrases that fill out for us this alimentary version of the Greek structural opposition of savagery to civilisation: ‘For there are no thorns’, used on two occasions by Aristophanes,

⁵⁹ *IG* I³.78, Xenophon, *Hell* 6.3,6, Isocrates, *Paneg.* 28-31, Plato, *Menex.* 237e-238a, Demosthenes 60.5, Smarczyk 1990, 224-252.

⁶⁰ Demosthenes 18.259.

⁶¹ Pseudo-Plutarch *Proverbia Alexandrina* 1.16 [*Paroemiographi*, I 323-4], cf. Diogenian 4.74, Zenobius 3.98, *Suda* epsilon 3971, with other references to the custom in Detienne 1977, 117, 188, nn. 82-4. Oakley and Sinos 1993, 29 and 136 nn. 39 and 40, noting that *likna* are shown in a wedding procession of 540-30 *BA* #310361 fig. 65, as noted already by Jane Harrison in her discussion of the custom, Harrison 1903, 313-7. On the significance of the acorn-eating Arcadians, see Burkert 1972, 84-5 with n. 1, Borgeaud 1988, 14-15.

comes ‘from the transformation of life into something more civilised’.⁶² ‘The thorny way of living (*bios akanthōdēs*): one which is difficult and harsh, the former way of living. And ‘the milled way of living’ (*alēlesmenos bios*). The easy and sweet.’ ‘It seems to recall the transformation in the way of life from the savage and thorny way of life that there was before, before there was cultivation of land and seeds’.⁶³

The thinking behind such practices and proverbial phrases is also reflected in more intellectual treatments of human nutrition. When Plato discusses a simple way of life for his city in the *Republic*, he includes the toasting of primitive acorns as part of their ‘feast’, provoking Glaucon to comment that it is as if he is producing a city for pigs.⁶⁴ The author of the treatise *On ancient medicine*, writing around 400 BCE, offers a complete history of human nutrition:

To trace the matter still further back, I think that not even the *diaita* and nourishment enjoyed at the present time (*hēi nun chreontai*) by men in health would have been discovered, had a man been satisfied with the same food and drink as satisfy an ox, a horse, and every animal except for mankind.... , Yet I am of opinion that to begin with man also used this sort of nourishment. Our present ways of living have, I think, been discovered and developed (*tetechnēmena*) during a long period of time. For many and terrible were the sufferings of men from strong and bestial (*thēriōdēs*) diet when they consumed foods both raw and unmixed (*akrēta*) and potent... For this reason the ancients too seem to me to have sought for nourishment that harmonised with their constitution, and to have discovered that which we use now. So from wheat, after steeping it, winnowing, grinding and sifting, kneading, baking, they produced bread, and from barley they produced *maza*. Experimenting with food they boiled or baked, after mixing, many other things, blending the strong and unmixed

⁶² Suda omicron 769, Aristophanes fr. 284, 499.

⁶³ Suda beta 295, alpha 1183.

⁶⁴ Plato, *Republic* 372d.

with the weaker components so as to adapt all to the constitution and power of man.⁶⁵

Conclusion. The pleasures of the flesh and the origins of pleasures

It may seem a bit of an anti-climax to conclude a survey of the origins of pleasure with the pleasure of avoiding indigestion by no longer having to eat acorns, but there are interesting patterns in the way the Greeks plotted these pleasures of the flesh onto a secular timeline that also apply to those pleasures of the flesh that we might more easily associate with the word pleasure, i.e. drinking and sex.

In the first place it does seem peculiar that the origin of pleasures should be so much to the foreground and continually rehearsed in Greek culture. This is particularly true of wine, which was never drunk, it sometimes seems, without some small allusion to the fact of its discovering, in the endless epiphanies of Dionysus, reproducing some first epiphany, and the pervasive minatory images of the dangers involved in the first sip. But the birth of Aphrodite also seems to have been kept vividly in mind by pageants such as the courtesan Phryne's emergence from the sea at Aegina during the Aphrodisia and the artworks supposedly based on that re-enactment, Apelles' famous painting for the temple of Asclepius in Cos and Praxiteles's naked Aphrodite Euploia for the temple in Cnidus. One could argue that the familiar epithets Cypris, Cytherea and Paphia on their own conjure up an image of Hesiod's maiden-form figure materializing out of the foam on the shore, of the birth of sex, as much as the epithet Delian applied to Apollo calls to mind the endless birth pangs of Leto and the lighting up of the world at the moment they were relieved. And although Plato's allusions to the origins of Eros and of Himeros in *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* will hardly at first have had an impact beyond a small group of devotees, they

⁶⁵ Hippocrates, *VM* 3.

nevertheless serve to confirm again the importance of origin-stories in Greek thinking about pleasure.

It is not just a tendency that can be discovered in the context of the origins of pleasure of course, as we have seen with the long lists of inventors produced by Pliny the Elder and Hyginus. In part this is the product of what we can call an etymological tendency in Greek thinking, the recourse to the rhetoric that it is at the origin of a thing that we can discover its true meaning, its essence or its most authentic form. But the obsession with firsts also draws attention to the way that the Greeks viewed the world-as-we-know-it as the result of a long accumulation of artefacts, institutions and forces. This worldview is in turn closely tied to the materiality of Greek polytheism, which envisions a composite creation with divided domains under the tutelage of different gods. Since religious festivals and cult demonstrate a powerful tendency to dwell on their own origins and foundations, if some pleasure or item of pleasure holds an important place within the domain of a particular divinity, then festivals and cult will tend to dwell on the origins of those pleasures and items of pleasure, thus confusing the discovery of wine and the arrival of the (mystic) cult of Dionysus, eliding the discovery of the secrets of the 'milled' way of life with the revelation of the Mysteries of Eleusis, the birth of *ta aphrodisia* with the cult of Aphrodite in Paphos. But if beginnings are a characteristic feature of Greek discourse and of Greek thinking in general, we need to ask how this feature manifests itself in the particular context of the pleasures of the flesh and whether this has consequences for the experience or the practices of pleasure.

The story of the birth of Eros as fourth thing in existence in Hesiod's *Theogony* serves at the very least to show Eros as a super-primordial force preceding the age of Ouranos, let alone of Cronus or Zeus, and therefore a central feature of the universe as we know it, to which all powers must bow—a

kind of cosmic background noise carrying echoes, as it were, of the Big Bang. We can perhaps see a reflection of that priority in the image on an alabastron of winged Eros goading Zeus, who is chasing Ganymede, and it is at the very least highly suggestive that Aristophanes is able to allude to Hesiod's Eros in *Birds*, spelling out the logical necessity of his early birth as a prerequisite for theogony. In other words the centrality of Eros in Greek thinking and the overwhelming power of *erōs* in Greek experience is supported by his early placing on the timeline of Greek cosmogony.

The birth of Aphrodite might be directly connected to the experience of pleasure on at least one occasion: the festival of Aphrodite that seems to have concluded the festival of Poseidon on the island of Aegina. Here we learn there were courtesans present, as one would expect. The philosopher Aristippus is said to have spent two months a year at the festival with the courtesan Lais, and whoever was Phryne's admirer after she had risen from the sea during the festival could have had a somewhat direct experience of sleeping with post-natal Aphrodite.⁶⁶ This blending of the imaginary and the real is not merely facetious. In the representations of the birth of Aphrodite—supposedly inspired by Phryne's Aeginetan bath—and the commentary on them in ecphrastic epigrams, the representations of the birth of the goddess of sexual love always inspire in the imagined viewer an appreciation of her charms, so that the realism of the image—'Where did he see me naked?', 'Olympus is bereft', 'Apelles watched Aphrodite', 'Apelles saw Aphrodite emerging from the waves', 'not painted but alive'—leads first to a sense of presence and then to a present desire in the onlooker—'let Ares' wrath be confounded'—one of whom, according to Pseudo-Lucian's famous account, actually left a sperm-stain on the Cnidian Aphrodite.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Athenaeus 13.588e.

⁶⁷ *Anthologia Palatina* 16.180.5-6, [Lucian] *Amores* 15, cf. Platt 2011, 170-211. An image of a wet undressed Aphrodite in a temple dedicated to Aphrodite of Fair Voyage, supposedly modelled on the courtesan Phryne coming out of the waves at Aegina, must automatically

This confluence of presence and *jouissance* is very similar to the way that the mere passing of Aphrodite in the Homeric Hymn throws *himeros* into the wild beasts of Mt Ida—wolves, lions, bears and panthers: ‘so that all at the same time mated two together in their shadowy lairs’.⁶⁸

The original coming of Aphrodite out of the frothy sea therefore is aligned with the process of the coming of desire in the subject and ultimately—and this is more than a facetious pun—with the experience of coming. That the experiencing of the power of a god can be transposed onto the (mythical) history of (the cult of) a god was, of course, one of the important insights of Walter Friedrich Otto in his study of Dionysus, arguing that stories about the advent of Dionysus do not refer to the actual historical introduction of the cult in some folk memory, but reflect his essential character as a ‘coming god’.⁶⁹ The emphasis on the first comings of the pleasures of the flesh in Greek culture reflects and provokes in the Greek subject an element of epiphany in the experience of pleasure, even of fresh discovery.

This sense of coming anew to pleasure, and the opportunity that goes with it to unthink the pleasures of the world and imagine a world not (yet) aware of them, is nicely elaborated in Herodotus's account of the expedition sent to the king of Ethiopia by Cambyses. The king is given wine for the first time and, alone of the products of the northern civilization, finds it exceedingly pleasant.⁷⁰ Even more striking perhaps is the episode of the Lotus-Eaters in the *Odyssey*, subjects of a pleasure—the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus—as far beyond the experience

have recalled her successful original landing on Paphos. At any rate the conclusion of a ritual bath of the goddess/her statue in the sea, like the sea-bath of Athena Polias in Athens, would in Aphrodite's case inevitably have evoked her original emergence from the sea.

⁶⁸ *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 5.74.

⁶⁹ Otto 1965, 97.

⁷⁰ Herodotus 3.22.3.

of the Greeks as wine from that of the Ethiopians.⁷¹ There is a powerful sense of contingency in Greek ontology and that sense of contingency applies also to its pleasures.

But as those of Odysseus's companions who are invited to eat of the fruit of the lotus soon discover, there are great dangers in these discoveries. Like the Cyclops or the centaurs or the Icarian shepherds *hoi prōtoi oinon piontes*, or like Laius 'the very first originator of love of males among the Greeks', the Ithacan lotus-eaters are overwhelmed by the new pleasure and forget themselves. So there is a second group of origin stories placed next in sequence to the birth/invention of pleasures that relate to their proper management. If images and discourse rehearsing the origins of wine and sex can be seen as by-products of the linkage of wine and sex to festivals and cults rehearsing the origins of Dionysus and Aphrodite, the discourse about the discovery of the proper *usage* of pleasure belongs to a narrative centred on politics and civilization. In Athens therefore it is an early king, Amphictyon, who lays down the rule that wine must always be mixed with water in order for alcohol to be safely consumed, although to be sure there are cults, e.g. Dionysus Orthos, and religious practices, e.g. a toast of neat wine for Agathos Daimon at the beginning of each Athenian symposium, that give the rules a ritual dimension.

An interesting case here is presented by the origin stories of homosexuality: Laius may have pioneered male homosexual *erōs*, according to Aelian/Euripides or, according to Plato, pioneered the perversion (*diephtharkenai*) of natural lust, but the tragic hubristic catastrophic myth of Laius's rape of Chrysippus, at least in the version retold by (or invented by) Euripides, could never have been a foundation myth for socially acceptable

⁷¹ Homer, *Od.* 9.83-105.

Greek Love, i.e. the elaborate protocols and rituals, the *nomoi*, laid down for *dikaïos erōs* in different cities, most notably in Athens.⁷² Plutarch is surely more plausible when he says it was not Laius but the Theban Law-givers who invented Theban homosexuality, while, according to Aristotle, it was Minos who set up Cretan homosexuality and in the same way Xenophon makes Lycurgus the inventor of Spartan homosexuality, whatever that was.⁷³ This sense of political origins, *polis* origins, for the safe management of pleasures was reinforced by comparative Hellenic sociology inasmuch as citizens of one polity noticed and pointed out the differences in, say, proper drinking practices, between Sparta and Athens and Thessaly, or in proper pederastic practices between Crete, Sparta, Athens, Boeotia and Elis.⁷⁴

There is room to doubt that any lawgiver, Minos, Lycurgus or Amphictyon, ever laid down how citizens were to drink or practise Greek Love, but in the case of these stories, myths of origin serve to reinforce the sense of institutionalization of the management of pleasures, associating the proper way of drinking, the proper way of pederasty with an individual polis and that polis's institutions. The origin stories might also serve to account for another peculiar feature of Greek pleasure, the extraordinary elaboration of protocols, formulaic practices and pottery-assemblages with which in different cities basic instincts such as (homo)sexual lust and drinking alcohol are barnacled: the following of boys in a pack, the hanging outside doorways, the never-modifying formula of the *kalos* inscription or, on the other hand, the correct sequence of toasts, the

⁷² Plato, *Laws* 636b, Davidson 2007, 469-70.

⁷³ For some sordid speculations see Davidson 2007, 330-1.

⁷⁴ There is a nice comparison of drinking-practices in Critias 88 B 33 D-K *ap.* Athenaeus 11.463ef, while the classic comparison of Greek pederastic practices is Plato, *Sym.* 182ac. It is with this second group of origins that the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* fits best in my view, a story about culture and institutions, *thesmoi*, rather than one about nature, a story about moving on from the Hippocratic author's unmixed, thorny, bestial way of life, to the tamed, milled and upright; but unlike same-sex *erōs* or drinking, the Mysteries of Eleusis/ bread were uniform, thanks to the successful mission of the Eleusinian Triptolemus.

mixing with water, the lying on couches, the equal pouring of wine, the singing of songs by turns, all always moving from left to right.

So perhaps the key to the experience of Greek pleasure which is revealed by thinking about the emplotment of pleasures and pleasure-ways onto a timeline is a double contingency, an awareness of the contingency of pleasures in the first place—that they have not always been around, that they remain un-enjoyed by others, that there may well be pleasures out there of which we know nothing—and then an awareness that in the protocols of pleasure, the management of appetites, other Greeks do it differently.